



PLANNING BULLETIN

BULLETIN No. 2-2008

SUBJECT: Land Regulation Processes

RESOURCE: Commission Development Planning Staff

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A General Outline of Processes Related to Regulation of Land Development in Sangamon County

Generally speaking, there are two processes that guide the development of land. Both require multiple reviews by various public bodies. These processes are required by ordinance and provided under state law. Some land development projects may require more review than others because of the nature of the projects or the scale of the subdivision, but the purposes of the review and the stages of the process are basically the same. This Bulletin will address provisions of Sangamon County code, although City of Springfield and other municipal codes will be very similar.

Zoning

Zoning generally provides for regulation of two things: the **purposes** for which the property will be allowed to be **used**, for example agricultural, residential or industrial uses; and **aspects of the structures** associated with the use – for example the bulk, size, and location of structures – as might be necessary for public health and safety, and for consistency across all properties having the same zoning.

Changes in zoning require a petition that is reviewed by (1) professional staff of the Regional Planning Commission, (2) the Zoning Board of Appeals, and ultimately (3) the County Board. The staff review pertaining to use is based on requirements in the zoning ordinance, such as other uses and other zoning in the area, suitability of existing zoning, the trends in the area, and, when use is changing from agricultural to non-agricultural development, the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) score.

Zoning code allows for petitioners to request Conditional Permitted Uses (additional uses specifically provided in code that may be appropriate under a particular zoning classification but are potentially incompatible with some permitted uses) and Variations of the code (which allow for changes in specific compatibility requirements such as yard dimension, height or lot configuration). Both Conditional Permitted Uses and Variations require findings that show that the request meets certain conditions described in the zoning ordinance. These are reviewed using the same process as changes in zoning.

Land Subdivision Process

The Land Subdivision process is intended to provide for the orderly subdivision and development of property. The development of the property includes such things as provision of adequate public services, protection of water resources, and safe and efficient streets. If the zoning process is intended to address matters of use, the land subdivision process is intended to ensure that the property is appropriately divided, infrastructure located, right-of-ways and easements provided, and other specified conditions met to effectively support that use over time.

The Land Subdivision process involves four detailed reviews that require an approval at each stage:

Location and Sketch Map Review

This review determines the overall suitability of the site for subdividing and subsequent development. This is determined by conformance with:

- The Comprehensive Plan and/or Land Use Policy Plan;
- Effect on natural resources and systems;
- Ability to provide adequate essential services: sewer, water, access, etc.;
- Conformance with the provisions of the section in code.

By ordinance, the Location and Sketch Map is reviewed, in the order given, by:

- Staff of the Regional Planning Commission;
- The Regional Planning Commission's Land Subdivision Committee, which includes governmental agencies with jurisdictions related to land development as well as representatives of the public;
- The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission;
- The County Public Health, Safety & Zoning Committee;
- The County Board.

Preliminary Plan Review

This review considers the detailed layout of the proposed subdivision showing the location of public improvements, lots, drainage, open space areas, and detailed soils mapping. The ordinance lays out 30 items to be addressed in this review.

The Preliminary Plan is reviewed by:

- Regional Planning Commission staff;
- The Commission's Land Subdivision Committee;
- The Planning Commission.

Construction Plan Review

This review considers the design of public improvements for the subdivision to determine if County standards are being met. The ordinance lays out 23 items to be included.

This review is handled by the County Engineer, but also involves the Dept. of Public Health, the Planning Commission, and utility companies.

Final Plat Review

This review addresses the final accurate location of lots, monuments, property for public use, easements and right-of-ways, covenants, wells and private sewage disposal systems.

By ordinance the Final Plat is reviewed by:

- Staff;
- The Land Subdivision Committee;
- The County Board.

Though not required by ordinance, the Final Plat is also reviewed by the County Board's Public Health, Safety & Zoning Committee.

The Land Subdivision review process is only complete following approval of the Final Plat by the County Board.

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